04
EIGHTH

TL/TLC: Castellan
Typesetter: TKS
Cleaner: Zack
PR: Not Juubun

READ ONLINE AT HTTP://READER.JAPANZAI.COM
DOWNLOAD FROM HTTP://DOWNLOAD.JAPANZAI.COM

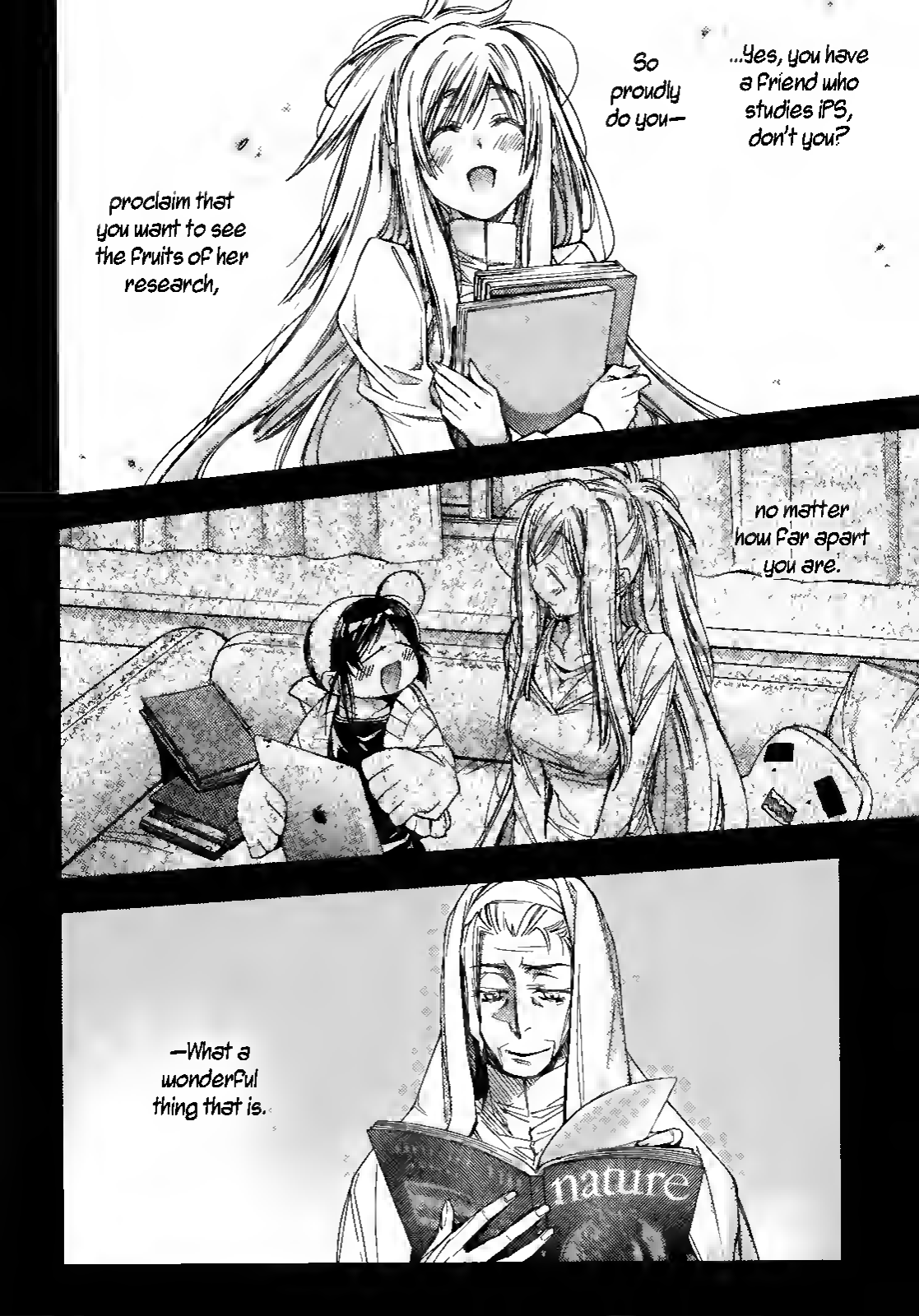
Operation.32

Quality of Life, ⑬

I LOVE YOU

I regret that I could not safeguard you
I was instructed to be your caretaker.
.....
of Cardinal Jenga's ideology.
even though I knew
I too was assaulted just before I became a Sister,
-Celcia-san.
.....!
which is all the more reason why I am sorry that happened.

I gave you such a hard time,
even though you are a good woman through and through.
I am so very sorry.
You, who did not truly wish to come to the Vatican,
were like a granddaughter to me.
...I, as someone who killed her unborn child, admit that I couldn't believe I felt that way.
And you, who came to me, wanted to read books on "IPS".
nature
—What a twist of fate.


...Yes, you have a friend who studies iPS, don't you?
So proudly do you—
proclaim that you want to see the fruits of her research,
no matter how far apart you are.
—What a wonderful thing that is.
nature

I will be put on trial, but do not worry;
you shall not be judged—
I would not stain the honor of a young woman like yourself,
nor the honor of the Papal Guard who protects you.
Let me protect you, no matter what.

Thank you for coming to the Vatican.

God's blessing be upon you.

ALL OF THIS—
...
SOB
UNH...
SNIFF
...
WAAH...
SISTER
...
Celcia
...
WHY...?
CELCIA. ARE YOU OKAY?

HOW COULD SHE LOVE ME THIS MUCH?
WHY WOULD THE SISTER
DO ALL OF THIS FOR ME...
EVEN THOUGH SHE
BARELY KNOWS ME?!
.....
...ISN'T IT THE SAME
AS HOW YOU CONSIDER RIO AN "IMPORTANT PERSON"?

IF SO, THEN I FEEL JUST AS THE SISTER DOES.
...NAOYA...
I DO NOT WISH FOR YOU TO WORRY IN THE SLIGHTEST.
I WANT TO HELP OUT SISTER ELDA SOMEHOW.

BISHOP...
THAT SISTER MUST BE A BEAUTIFUL "ONEE-SAN", HUH?
SHE IS, RIGHT?
.....
...Do you like particularly strict women?
...Well, any-way...
She is very much
a woman of refine-ment.

SISTER...
She cared deeply for Celcia,
that much I know...
CRY
...
WAAAAAH!
!?
H... HEY, CELCIA.
Celcia.

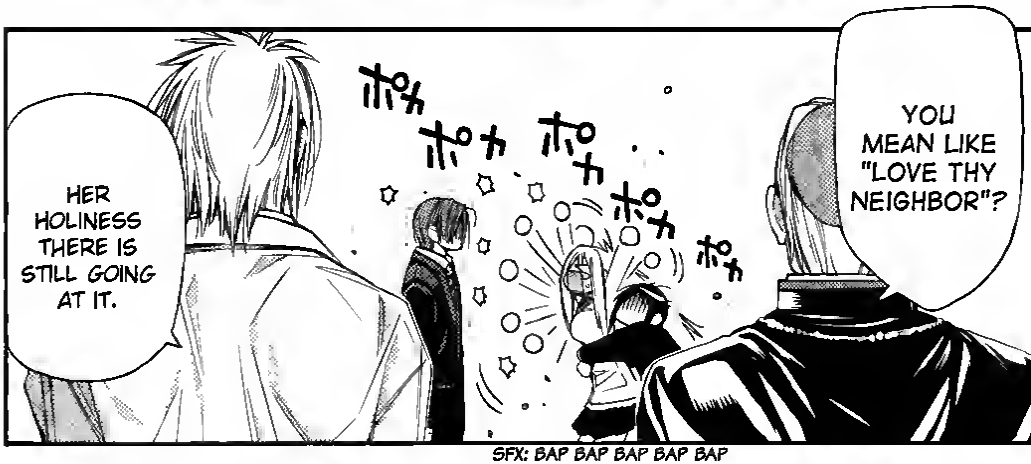
WAAH
....
AAAH
...
WHAT'S WRONG?
HEY!
Wh-Why are you crying so much...?
OH, LIKE YOU CAN TALK.
WHAT?
I CAN'T BEAR IT!
THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH.
A LOT HAS HAPPENED, AND IT'S NOT LIKE SHE CAN JUST SMILE ABOUT IT!
No, I just...
...Yeah.

Now that I think about it, the only times I do see you are when you're crying.
Why is that?
...It hurts to see you cry, Celcia...
-TH-
-AT'S...
TH-
-AT'S...
SFX: *CHOKE*...
SFX: SOB...

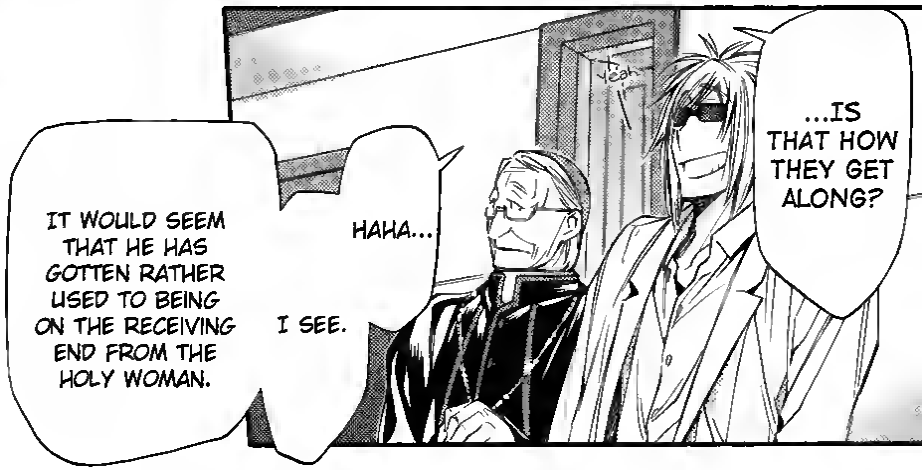
THAT'S NOT LUCA-SAN'S FAULT AT AAAAAALLL!!
SFX: UWAAAAAAAAH!!

...Wh-
What ...?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "WHAT"?!
...WHOA...
This is interesting...
I WAS WORRIED!
Uh...
あぁあぁ
AND THEN WHAT?! LIKE I'M THE ONE WHO'S WRONG?!
N... No... But I said you didn't have to worry about m-
Er...
Ah...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD, YOU KNOW?!
SFX: AAAAAAAH!!

LUCA-SAN!
...true, but...
Well, that's...
I'M SURE THE SISTER STOPPED YOU.
ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU PLANNED TO DO?!
THAT'S FOR ME TO DECIDE!!
I... suppose so, yes...
EXCUSE ME...
Uhm... Please continue...
Er, no... Regard-less...
SO I SHOULDN'T BE CRYING?!
WE HAVE PUT YOU THROUGH SO MUCH TROUBLE WITH THIS—
THANK YOU, ARCH-BISHOP.



SFX: BAP BAP BAP BAP BAP


...IS THAT HOW THEY GET ALONG?
Yeah.
HAHA...
I SEE.
IT WOULD SEEM THAT HE HAS GOTTEN RATHER USED TO BEING ON THE RECEIVING END FROM THE HOLY WOMAN.

Well, it doesn't have to be "peace" exactly.

AND, UM... THAT YOUNG MAN, NAOYA-KUN...
HIM COMING TO THE VATICAN REALLY SAVED US.
...I BELIEVE THAT IF THINGS HAD CONTINUED AS THEY WERE, SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN RAPED, AND THEN PARADED IN FRONT OF THE ACADEMY...
cry
*Isn't that enough?
Now, now
.....
.....
WHY WOULD THE VATICAN FORCE HER TO GO THROUGH AN ACADEMY?

AS THE HEAD OF THIS ESTABLISH-MENT, YOU SHOULD KNOW.
THE VATICAN HOLDS SHARES IN MANY BIOLOGY-RELATED COMPANIES ACROSS THE GLOBE.
THE REASON FOR MAKING HER GO THROUGH AN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE WAS BECAUSE OF THE VATICAN'S "TREASURER", CARDINAL ORSINI. WHAT I MEAN IS—
...YOU WANTED TO AUCTION OFF HER HOLINESS?

...IT IS TO OUR UTTER SHAME.
...DON'T YOU THINK THAT THERE'S A WAY
TO USE CELCIA'S ABILITY WITHOUT INVITING CONFLICT?
WELL...?
I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR HELP IN THIS.
CALL ME AGAIN, ARCH-BISHOP.
.....?
.....
WHAT?
What I'm getting at is—

I thought it would be better if I were dead...
DON'T SAY THAT!
LUCA-SAN IS ACTING STRANGE ...!
HE SAID IT..
Am I acting that different-ly...?
...Am.....
WHY DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND?
SFX: *CRY*...!
YOU'D GO SO FAR AS TO LIE TO ME
AND TO SAY THAT ME CRYING HURTS YOU, AND THEN YOU SAY THAT I'VE BEEN CRYING MY WHOLE LIFE?!

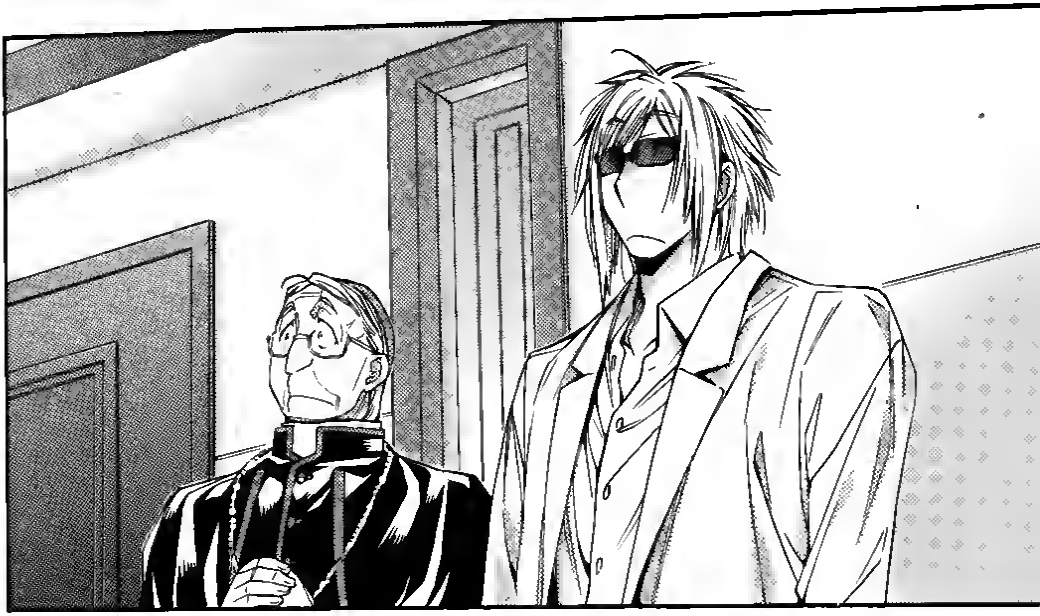
I HATE THE LUCA-SAN WHO LIES LIKE THAT.
I HATE IT WHEN YOU LIE LIKE THAT.
.....

...It's just that I...
To me, you are an "important person", and...
as long as you remain in this worthless world—

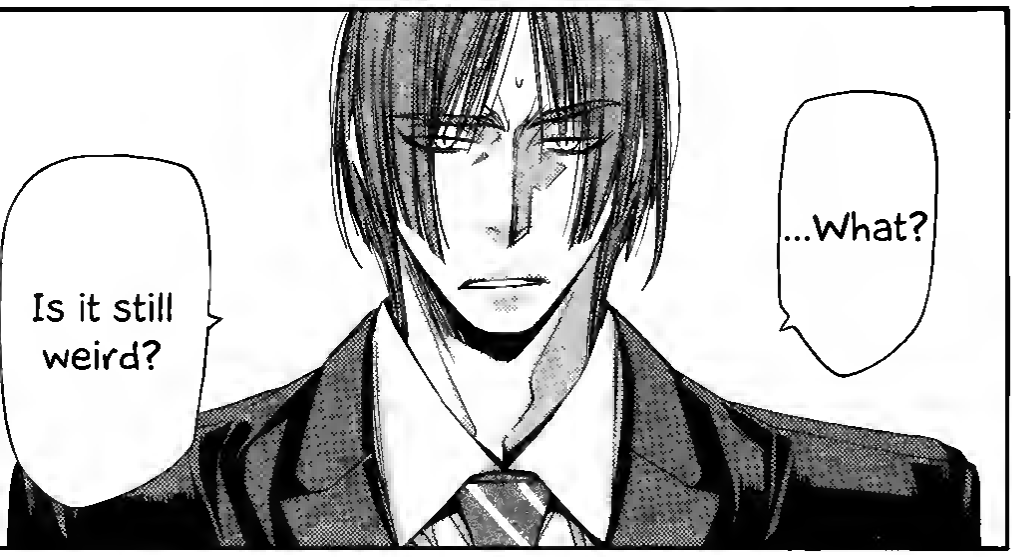
if you, of all beings, cannot exist in this world, then the world is wrong.
That's why you are the only thing that matters.
If you are going to make me say that it would be better if you were gone,
then I thought that I should die in your place.

...Is that really so strange?
.....
SFX: TREMBLING...
IT IS STRANGE ...
Why...?
MMM... THE WAY YOU SAID IT WAS WEIRD?

L... LUCA-SAN...
I will do everything you say.
If it will keep you from crying, then I will not lie to you anymore.
...I under-stand.
It's just that you are an important person to me. I would risk my life to protect you, no matter how many times.
I love you.



Eh?



?
Didn't you hear me?
All I did was change how I said it.
Then what?
...NO...
IT'S NOT "WEIRD", BUT...
SFX: SLIDES IN
ずい
Celcia.
EEK!
びくっ
SFX: SHOCKED
SFX: YIII
びくっ
N-N-N-N-NOOO!
UM...
I...

Love—

...NO MATTER HOW YOU PUT IT—

IT'S JUST TOO MUCH.

タタタ
AH-
HEY, CELCIA!
SFX: COLLAPSE
おおお
Wh-
Why, Celcia?!
IDIOT! IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!
おおおおお
Cel-ci-aaa!
みかん

INTENDED TO CRY ALONE. JUST ME BY MYSELF.
...I'VE ALWAYS
MY PROTECTION—
...Hey, why are you carrying her?
YOU'RE CARRYING THE BOX.
...Oh yeah.

HAS ENDED.

NEXT TIME FOR SURE, IT'LL BE MY TURN.